

'American Capitalism' Is the Enemy

Sparked by the Black Lives Matter movement, cities across the United States went up in flames last year, beset with looters, agitators, and [killers](#). As leaves, and ashes, fell softly last autumn, [homicide rates](#) began to soar nationwide as [\\$1 billion-plus](#) in claims registered on the insurance industry's books, making these riots the most destructive in American history.

Even so, last week, Norwegian Member of Parliament Petter Eide [nominated Black Lives Matter](#) for the Nobel peace prize.

The most peculiar thing about the mayhem last summer was not the media coverage, the bipartisan kowtowing to the demands of agitators, or even the magnitude of the destruction. Instead, it was the universal embrace of the movement behind the madness by the managers of industry.

A week after a gunman shot and killed [federal officer](#) Patrick Underwood while a Black Lives Matter protest roared on nearby, as riots were gaining momentum across the country, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey [encouraged his followers](#) to "Download Signal," an encrypted messaging app. Signal served as an [organizing tool](#) for BLM activists to conspire away from prying eyes.

Three days after Dorsey tweeted that thoughtful tip, [looters killed](#) a retired African American police captain named David Dorn as he tried to protect a friend's pawn shop in St. Louis, Missouri.

A Not-So-Free Market

Dorsey is not alone. The number of [corporations](#) that backed the cause—and continue to support it—is dizzying. IBM, Microsoft, Amazon, Target, Walmart, Home Depot, T-Mobile, Uber, Facebook, Apple, Intel, [the list](#) goes [on](#) and [on](#). PayPal

announced it would earmark [\\$530 million](#) to “provide immediate financial relief, sustained support and long-term investment to expand economic opportunity for Black and underrepresented minority businesses and communities.” Citigroup published a study that put the “cost of black inequality” in the United States at [\\$16 trillion](#).

Many of these same corporations have [aligned themselves](#) against right-wing populism specifically and Middle Americans in general. A single, solitary riot on January 6 by Trump supporters provoked their purge from the internet, the financial strangulation of allied lawmakers, the denial of services to both, the shuttering of bank accounts, and more. All, ironically, under the pretense of combating extremism—a justification the industry managers most recently used to quell an online populist revolt.

Retail traders using the Robinhood broker-dealer app managed to kneecap Wall Street hedge funds that attempted to short sell GameStop, a brick-and-mortar video game retailer. So far, populist short squeezers have cost Wall Street short-sellers [\\$20 billion](#). Corporations and their allies in the media reacted by reminding Americans that the free market isn’t free at all.

[Discord](#) and [Facebook](#) moved to restrict groups used by retail traders to communicate and organize, both under the pretense of terms of service violations unrelated to trading. [Robinhood](#) itself has alternated between imposing bans and restrictions on trading, enraging users who accused the company of [caving to pressure](#) from Wall Street.

Laura Unger, the former commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission, compared retail traders’ actions to the riot Trump supporters staged on January 6 at the Capitol. While the events at the Capitol caused “personal, bodily harm,” retail traders did “financial harm,” she [told CNBC](#). The media has [drawn connections](#) between these traders and [Trump](#)

[voters](#), which is true insofar as both revolted against the elites—but the implicit and more critical point she wishes to make is that these people are unwashed, backward, and probably racist.

The Best Activism Corporate Money Can Buy

While the scale of all this is unprecedented, the fundamentals are not new. Corporations support and court social upheavals because that is a far more effective way than force to neutralize them. Agitators and their movements, as Canadian [philosopher George Grant](#) wrote in a critique of the Left, “are taken into the system and trivialized. They are made to serve the interest of the system they are supposed to be attacking, by showing that free speech is allowed.”

If so many leftists did not hate everyday Americans more than they hated that system, they would not be so often and easily appeased. Black Lives Matter ultimately strengthened the hand of the system tenfold, allowing it to rehabilitate its image while increasing its power and reach.

Virtually every issue that reduces American life to scrapping over spoils follows this pattern.

The “dirty secret of affirmative action politics,” Richard Kahlenberg noted in 1996, “is that corporate America actually supports affirmative action,” whether it is based on race or sex or nationality. A culture of affirmative action, in reality, has little to do with merit and equality or justice, and more with an ever-expanding base of consumers and producers who keep [wages down](#) and demand high. Many conservatives who spend their days decrying the march of the Left have internalized this scheme.

“Despite the third-wave feminist tendency to conflate the ephemeral patriarchy with capitalism, the two couldn’t be more incompatible,” writes conservative journalist Tiana Lowe in “[Capitalism Crushed the Patriarchy](#).” Free markets, she

concludes, “have revolutionized the quality of human life for everyone, but perhaps for none more than women.” In other words, she unwittingly agrees with Karl Marx that capitalism, not socialism, dissolved the bonds of tradition, of the family, and encouraged women to abandon the crib for the cubicle—it’s just that she insists this is a reason to celebrate.

“Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class,” Marx wrote in 1848 on the corrosive consequences of capitalism. “All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.” Contemporary conservatives make the same observations just as approvingly as Marx, they just aren’t honest or smart enough to realize that fact.

More to the point, corporations support affirmative action for the same reason they support the politics of mass immigration and are willing to pay off agitators: profit and power and an expanded consumer base that is essentially a morally unmoored, deracinated proletariat enslaved to debt. In other words, people who cannot govern themselves will do, and *buy*, what they are told.

More Easily Managed People

This system praises diversity, but its end is homogeneity. Just a [handful of billionaires](#) own America’s newspapers, for example, while [six corporations](#) control virtually all media outlets. When ordinary conservatives decry socialism, what they are really railing against is centralized planning in the hands of a few—but this is already a fact of American life. The American economy is defined by consolidated corporate power that effectively does just that.

“Crony capitalism” is, therefore, a misnomer because it suggests what we are witnessing is an exception to an otherwise good rule when it is the rule

itself—managerialism—that fuses industry and government. The active heads of government bureaus, wrote James Burnham, “are the managers-in-government, the same, or nearly the same, in training functions, skills, habits of thought as the managers-in-industry.”

None of this can be said aloud, so a cosmopolitan myth of universalism is woven, with liberty, equality, and opportunity as its tenets. All the claims of particularism, such as family, sex, religion, human nature, and nation-state become artificial at best; oppressive if white, heterosexual, male, Christian, and Western.

The traditions, symbols, and heroes of historic America naturally come under attack because they are representations of differentiation; thus, barriers to creating a homogenized mass society fit for mass consumption and production. Indeed, corporations have spearheaded the deconstruction of American civilization and the creation of a new, more easily “managed” one.

Thus, the myth of democratic capitalism, in reality, is an expression of the personal and group interests of an oligarchy that casts itself and its actions as serving the public interest. But the mask slips every time not-so-thinly veiled force or fraud is employed to protect and consolidate its power, interests, and ideology—whether openly engaging in market manipulation to protect Wall Street or removing entire social media networks from the web to silence dissent.

The truth is that the political economy of the United States is no longer capitalism but managerialism, which slit capitalism’s throat sometime in the 20th century following the Great Depression and two world wars, replacing the bourgeois elite of yesteryear with managers presiding over a system that separates ownership and control.

Whatever its theoretical merits, to defend what people are

pleased to call “American capitalism” today is to garland the ideological chains of a ruling class that is hostile to private property, genuine small business, and traditional institutions because all these are impediments to the growth and control of the managerial class.

The movement that emerges from the ashes of the present must disabuse itself of a myth that serves no purpose other than to deceive Americans into docility for fear of disturbing the not-so-invisible hand around their throats deluding them into believing that the apogee of human experience is the other side of materialism. There is nothing to lose but the chains.

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